

EHU CORE CURRICULUM CONCEPTION

Концепция общегуманитарной подготовки студентов ЕГУ была обсуждена и одобрена в 2014 г. и уже четвертый год практически реализуется.

University Mission

The European Humanities University is a private institution of higher education based on principles of institutional autonomy and standards of the European Higher Education Area. Since its founding in Minsk in 1992, the EHU has remained committed to Belarus. Existing in political exile, it resides in Vilnius and is hosted by and receives the support of donors and the citizens of Lithuania.

At the heart of EHU is the production and dissemination of socially responsible and critical knowledge in the social sciences and the humanities, ensuring quality education through the integration of teaching with research, creative and applied projects.

EHU uses its potential for the development of a European intellectual space without borders, the return of knowledge to Belarus, the establishment of innovative social partnerships, the development of civic education, and the broadening of human rights and potential through freedom of expression, thought, and research.

Conceptual Principles of a Liberal Arts Education

A 21st century societies and education are in a state of constant social change and should be viewed as a process which spans the entire life of the individual. Becoming well educated is not so much the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills, but competencies necessary for a full and dynamic life. Adaptability

and flexibility are critical characteristics of a well-educated person. Professional and labor markets increasingly rely on multi-disciplinary skill and competencies, combined with organically with modern knowledge and creativity.

B. Knowledge in the social sciences and humanities resides within a constant process of historical self-reflection, particularly within the European intellectual tradition. It is only through creative and relevant interpretation of the fundamental values of traditions and practices within specific social, national and regional contexts that individual and cultural character is formed.

C. The quality of knowledge in the social sciences and humanities is dependent upon the depth of human experience, the ontology of human existence, and going beyond abstract schemes of classical knowledge. Above all, the human being should be seen as fully immersed *-in the world*, not set apart as an independent agent (ego) or as an anonymous member of a greater society.

D. It is necessary to understand the character and powerful cognitive potential of works of art which contribute to an in-depth understanding of human and social reality within an aesthetic framework. Great works of art serve as an incentive to creativity and openness to the voice of historical existence most clearly heard through this Language.

E. Knowledge in the social sciences and humanities provides involvement in the traditions of specific social, cultural and political circumstances. It also provides insight into specific systems of human dependency (power-knowledge, socio-economic structures, structures of meaning, etc.)

F. For EHU, in particular, a liberal arts education is intended to promote democratic social transformations in Belarus (and the region) through the direct application of Western socio-cultural patterns to historical and social contexts. Comprehensive analysis of the post-Soviet tradition and a thorough study of the possible methods of cultural translation of European values into the languages of regional social practices, can become an important factor to ensure that transformation processes are systemic and efficacious.

General Educational Goals of the Core Curriculum

- 1) Ability to think critically, introspectively and creatively.
- 2) Ability to closely analyze texts (verbal and visual).
- 3) Understanding events within a particular historical and social context.
- 4) Mastery of different “languages”.

Specific Acquired Key Competencies

- 1) The student should be comfortable with a broad spectrum of texts (reading, annotating, structuring in accordance with ‘meaning’)
- 2) The student should have an active and personal relationship to texts (interpretation and understanding)
- 3) The student should be capable of presenting written ideas in a clear and reasoned manner.
- 4) The student should be an effective public speaker and thoughtful listener.
- 5) The student should be capable of applying theoretical knowledge and creatively generating ideas within a social and team framework.
- 6) The student should possess a basic knowledge and ability to apply scientific methodologies.
- 7) The student should demonstrate the ability to organize, plan, make decisions and assume responsibility for the quality of their work and its social results.
- 8) The student should understand the importance of maintaining a commitment to life-long learning and open-mindedness.

Pedagogical Methodology

1) To identify a block of core curriculum texts and experiences (the total number, the ratio of theoretical and artistic, verbal and visual texts).

Texts, creative works and projects will determine the identity of the core curriculum program in humanities, based on the program principles and realistic assessment of problems with reading by the present “digital” generation.

The fundamental criterion of the course quality is the teacher’s ability to work with the text and creative works as a *midwife* (not his/her “paraphrasing”), having the ability to initiate an active hermeneutic approach to the text or art work on the part of students.

To build methodically productive work in different courses using different perspectives and ways of reading and observing. Particular attention is paid to the interaction of European and Belarusian dimensions of educational practices.

Personalization of learning that meets the very nature of core curriculum in humanities, allowing students to choose their own track of study within the framework of the proposed set of texts, experiences, projects, personalities and personal requests.

2) To formulate a number of key questions that would cut across most courses.

Highlight the most critical issues within the social sciences and humanities - a human being, being/existence, time, history, memory, language, society, everyday life, knowledge, power, freedom. Pose questions such as: “What is a human being?”, “How

are being/existence and time related?"; "What does it mean to live in a society?"; "What happens to an individual under the influence of new technologies?" etc. To teach the generation of the Internet and Instagram how to manage and analyze texts and develop a historical understanding.

3) To organize the interaction of faculty in differing forms of methodological seminars, open lectures and workshops

Provide a pedagogical support program to improve integration within program of methods and content. Particular attention is to be paid to how to respond to the fundamental questions of life while speaking the language of the 21st century generations. Explore how to combine and take advantage in the educational practices of the core curriculum traditional and new learning formats, including a blended model which utilizes the latest technology.

4) To use team projects in a wide array of forms:

- A faculty member should function as a coach in the game of *engaged learning* involving all students,
- Should read texts for a specific result (the creative essay on individual issues, your translation of the text)
- Should visualize creative results in a broad range of forms (art works, a scripts, radio programs, experimental videos, educational films).

Project team activity will assist:

- not only in acquiring different skills and abilities (writing, composition, filming, directing, designing, etc.), but to develop them and solidify knowledge on the basis of the material studied;
- in acquiring knowledge through mutual learning, to learn to see the material through the eyes of the 'other,' and to deeper understand the material itself with the other;
- in learning to "see" the text and its semantic structure and the work of art's revelational character.

5) To learn foreign languages (especially English) by working with texts in the humanities and social sciences, translation, reflection on the limits of translatability, and intertextuality. The main forms of work with texts should be through courses in English (if possible, and other foreign languages) comprising not less than 25% of the credits allocated in the core curriculum block, as well as inclusion of texts in foreign

languages (translation workshops, studying specialized vocabulary, etc.) into Russian and Belarusian language courses.

Structure of Core Curriculum

The model of liberal arts education stands as the basis for the organization of the core curriculum, developed in close cooperation with universities working within a similar system. This model requires a flexible curriculum that combines the requirements of the breadth of disciplinary coverage with in-depth study of individual subject areas, encouraging interdisciplinary work and offering students freedom of choice, while utilizing content within disciplinary areas.

Characteristics of the educational structure

- regular schedule (1-2nd years: not less than 6 hours of classes per week)
- methodological seminar for faculty at least 1 time per month (at least 8 hours per month)
- supervision of 1-2nd year students (at least 2 hours per week)
- interaction with tutors (at least 2 hours per week)

Cooperation with Academic Departments and Senate

- Offer key texts for obligatory courses.
- Offer teachers for obligatory courses.
- Offer essential questions/theme for all courses
- Offer courses for elective module «Comprehension and Creativity» 12 ECTS, 5-7 semesters.

Core Curriculum Courses

Essential content, key themes/question, core texts, anthology, assessments and the concrete title of each course is the task for regular methodological workshops for teachers who will prepare syllabi and will work with the students in classroom.

1) Title: Language and Thinking

Subtitle/Module: “Freedom and Responsibility”

(Seminar, 6 ECTS, 1 semester, obligatory)

Course started in 2014.

The seminar is an intensive introductory course in the ‘liberal arts’ tradition that places an emphasis on writing, thinking and creative practices. Developed in collabo-

ration with EHU's international partners since 2013, the Language and Thinking seminar establishes EHU's strength in engaging students in their own learning process. It aims at overcoming the difficulties faced by students, trying to express their thoughts, and to write and think both critically and creatively. The course promotes the development of habits of thoughtful reading and discussion of texts, encouraging students to accurately organize their thoughts and ideas, self-reflect and engage in collaboration with others around questions such as "What does it mean to be human?" and "How do we realize freedom and responsibility?". The community atmosphere created by this unique course makes it a staple feature of EHU's new vision for a Core Curriculum that will give confidence to students entering the university to actively participate in how higher education will shape their own lives, their peers and society in general.

Competencies:

- Students will analyze and evaluate oral, written and visual communication in terms of situation, audience, purpose and diverse points of view.
- Students will engage with academic texts and art works, share their thoughts and respond to teachers and students in accordance with 'meaning.'
- Students will express the structure of their ideas in compelling statements and order supporting points logically, convincingly and creatively.
- Students will employ processes such as planning, collaborating, organizing, composing, annotating, revising, and editing to create written and oral presentations.
- Students will gain interpretative skills across a range of genres, from poetry and theatre to natural science, speech making and debate.
- Students will recognize the distinctions among opinions, facts, and inferences in reasoned discourse.
- Students will be able to use various forms of communication, off-line and/or on-line in ways suitable to the target and the subject matter.

2) Title: Introduction to Humanities

(First Year Seminar, 12 ECTS, 1-2 semesters, obligatory)

Course will be developed in spring 2016 and start in autumn 2016.

The "first year" seminar aims to generate a number of basic learning competencies with a focus on developing the ability to critically analyze a variety of texts, to discuss them orally and in written form and to prepare creative presentations. Being interdisciplinary in character, the seminar builds on the Language and Thinking seminar, adding a further depth of exploration with longer texts, writing and speaking assignments and engaging themes. It is designed to give students an opportunity to investigate the main seminar topic from the point of view of literature, philosophy, religion, politics, natural science and art. The seminar is a collective forum in which teachers

and students work together to read, write and discuss the fundamental problems of culture in weekly seminars, to which are added plenary talks, guest lectures, panel presentations, performances, student workshops and forums. This course begins the first year introduction to texts, themes, figures and problems that are specific to the European tradition, and in particular that raise issues faced today in the EU's Eastern-partnership region.

Competencies:

- Students will learn to present written ideas in a clear and reasoned manner.
- Students will gain the ability to formulate essential questions based on reading and active listening.
- Students will develop an active and personal relationship to a broad spectrum of texts.
 - Students will draw on historical and/or cultural perspectives to evaluate any or all of the following: contemporary problems/issues, modes of expression, and ideas which are necessary for people today and into the future.
 - Students will be able to recognise the value and relevance of humanities approaches for professional development.
 - Students will learn to articulate the diversity of human experience in the European tradition across a range of historical periods and/or cultural perspectives.
 - Students will analyze and critically interpret significant primary humanities texts and/or works of art, including fine art, literature, music, theatre, & films, as forms of cultural and creative expression.
 - Students will develop their public speaking and oratory skills.
 - Students will examine the possibilities and limits of scientific methodologies in their application to contemporary world problems.

3) Title: Foreign Language

(12 ECTS, 1-2 semesters, obligatory)

Foreign language is a challenge that has always been a key problem for humanities. It is not only necessary for students to exercise their professional life in a multilingual world, but is also essential to accessing cultural meaning through the spoken and written word – the doorways to interdisciplinary and international understanding and knowledge. The basis of foreign language courses in EHU should be a strategy “to write, to read, to speak, “and vice versa , “to speak, to read, to write,” which will provide access to humanities texts in foreign languages, where the primary role today belongs to the English language.

Language education at EHU flexibly allows students the opportunity to choose the path of their encounter with a foreign language. Depending on the student's level of preparation, they may choose:

a) Developing all four language skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) and achieving mastery of substantial vocabulary and grammar structures to become an independent language user,

b) Learning through content and language integrated learning (CLIL) which involves a curricular subject through the medium of a language.

c) Learning academic language, includes comprehending academic texts and lectures in a variety of educational methods. They include academic vocabulary and writing, note-taking strategies, reading skills and textual strategies, text summarizing, academic discourse of a subject, and achieving mastery over scientific discourse to efficiently communicate in an academic field.

Competencies:

- Students will improve their ability to communicate effectively both orally and in written form

- Students will develop receptive (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing).

- Students will acquire and use knowledge for different purposes, i.e. 'learning to do' in a foreign language.

- Students will work on their skills of speaking in interpersonal encounters and in front of an audience

- Students will accommodate to different social contexts and language varieties inherent in them based on intercultural dialogue.

- Students will acquire language in a particular subject area, i.e. "talking a subject".

- Students will prepare for their chosen profession and life in a more internationalised society, i.e. "social uses of a subject".

- Students will gain translation skills by working with texts in different languages and translating texts between languages.

- Students will acquire note-taking strategies, reading skills and strategies with academic texts, text summarizing, and academic discourse of a subject.

4) Title: Introduction to Social Sciences

(Second Year Seminar, 12 ECTS, 3–4 semesters, obligatory)

Course will be developed in autumn 2016/spring 2017 and start in autumn 2017.

"Introduction to the Social Sciences" continues to develop the active 'writing and thinking' practices in the Core Curriculum, now focusing on 'scientific' analysis, in ad-

dition to the philosophical and literary traditions in the humanities. As a product of the 20th century, the social sciences have made the claim that they provide the same degree of certitude and validity as natural scientific knowledge and, thus, the basis for a rational and predictable development of society. Such claims seem an old-fashioned anachronism today. At the same time people need to have reasonably justified knowledge about society, its structural components and functional practices, to gain knowledge that will allow us to foresee trends of social development in concrete circumstances. The interdisciplinary course's main features and concepts explores features of contemporary social processes: modernity, late modernity, postmodernity, globalization, network society, risk society, history/memory, space, time, normativity, publicity, technology, communication, mediatization, everyday life, power, freedom, and others. The course recognizes social knowledge as always mediated by the value orientations of acting individuals and is formed into specific social practices as a means of making decisions that emerge within these practices. The course contributes to developing competencies required in any area of social and professional life.-

Competencies:

- Students will identify, describe and attempt to understand human behaviours and how they are influenced by social structures, institutions, and processes within the contexts of diverse communities.
- Students will articulate how beliefs, assumptions, values and ethics are influenced by factors such as history, economics, politics, culture, religion, and social institutions.
- Students will improve their ability to apply social scientific methodologies and to use the theoretical knowledge base of the social sciences to identify, describe, explain, and critically evaluate relevant issues, ethical dilemmas, and arguments in practical situations.
- Students will creatively generate ideas and assignments within a social and team framework.
- Students will be able to convey basic ideas from the social sciences to a non-specialist audience or to practitioners of other disciplines.
- Students will analyze information (sources, texts, scholarly and academic writings), contextualising them and using the analytical results to address relevant social problems.

5) Title: “Comprehension and Creativity”¹

(12 ECTS, 5 and 7 semester, obligatory with Department specific electives)

Courses will be developed in autumn 2017/spring 2018 and start in autumn 2018

Publication of the catalogue of elective courses – autumn 2017

There are so many Great Texts – philosophical, literary, artistic, legal, political, media ones. The seminar aims at developing of the advanced interpretative skills that would accumulate basic knowledge in Social Sciences and Humanities acquired during previous two years of study and allow student to pass to their own creative or research activities.

Interpretation and comprehension strategy of the seminar is based on the following methodological premises:

a) Contextualization of texts and creative works: consideration of particular discipline’s topics (Media and Technology, Governance and Justice, Design and Public Arts, Freedom and Transformation) in the context of the Core Curriculum’s big questions (about human life, knowledge, society, etc.) to provide students with the sense of European tradition.

b) Texts from a historical perspective:

- Reading them not as sets notions and definitions, but as stories, coherent narratives with specific textual, “pictorial” patterns (and complimentary “reading” of images, videos as visual texts), in order to discover the hermeneutic potential of the poetic word.

- Placing them in particular historical context, demonstrating that abstract knowledge is always socially relevant and historically specific.

- Reading texts through the lens of personal experience, combining being in *time* and involvement in *history* in the act of comprehension.

¹ The Core Curriculum course(s) in the 5th and 7th semesters are still an open question for the CCC to discuss and decide in the coming months, with input from the Departments, based around a core set of texts and themes for the chosen Categories. In other words, establishing the essential content, key themes and questions, core texts, the anthologies, assessments and the concrete title of each course are tasked to faculty in the regular methodological workshop who will prepare the syllabus and work with students in the classroom and beyond it. These Categories continue EHU’s Core Curriculum Program, by adding to the rich text-based ‘language and thinking’ methods more applied multi-media projects in the students’ assignments, along with a focus on research conducted for practical purposes.

Competencies:

- Students will define and pursue research topics which can make a significant contribution to knowledge of human beings, their forms of expression and their cultural and social environments.
- Students will develop skills to work autonomously in their own field and in a collaborative way with others in order to increase their knowledge and facilitate its transfer into other interdisciplinary areas.
- Students will gain the ability to organize, plan, make decisions and assume responsibility for the quality of work and its social results.
- Students will gain experience in both leadership and followership through activities related to scholarship and civic engagement.
- Students will demonstrate a capacity for original thinking based on the ability to look critically and self-critically at ideas and be able to apply them in practice.
- Students will assess their own strengths and weaknesses and devise strategies to fulfil their research and professional goals. Students will understand the importance of maintaining a commitment to life-long learning and open-mindedness.